

Comments of Consumer Counsel Mary J. Healey

Change a Light, Change the World Campaign

Monday, October 23, 2006 – South Arsenal Neighborhood Apartments, Hartford, CT

Such a small act with such huge positive impacts for our city, our state, our region, our world ...

What you are doing is called energy efficiency - removing high electricity-using bulbs for those that use less electricity. I have them in my house and they work. My electric bill is lower, these bulbs provide me with good light to read by and they last a long time so I don't need to keep changing them!

- Changing these bulbs is a good first step. We have a long way to go. Today, this event and others like it help to educate people and decision makers about why we should be doing more energy efficiency projects. It is proven that energy efficiency projects cost much less than any other projects to bring in more energy to the State. For every dollar invested in energy efficiency, you realize a savings of \$4-5 over the life of the project.
- Changing a light also reduces Connecticut's share of the costs for the New England power grid because it frees up energy for use elsewhere in the State and the Region.
- Changing a light cleans up our air by reducing the need for more polluting kinds of energy resources like big coal and oil power plants. These are some of the most important and compelling public interest reasons for all of us to actively support energy efficiency first when planning for our energy needs.

Energy efficiency has an important role in schools too. The High Performance Schools Initiative is looking at ways to improve energy use at Connecticut's schools. Using the EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager Benchmarking Model, the study concluded that Connecticut schools are far below the average benchmark for energy efficiency, receiving a score of 26 compared to the average of 50. The report indicated that by raising the schools performance just to average could save \$46 million. Imagine what a school system could do with that kind of money! Under Connecticut's school construction grant formula, between 20-80% of the cost a town incurs to incorporate high performance design can be reimbursed. The Clean Energy Fund and the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund, funded by electric utility ratepayers, also provide incentives for these types of programs.

Even with high energy costs, there are lots of people who still do not believe in using these energy efficient bulbs or switching off lights and computers when not in use. Perhaps they don't know that they are wasting their money and ours because it costs all of us more to keep the electric grid running reliably for all the power needs in our state and the New England region.

Your challenge and mine is to help others understand that by changing light bulbs, and being more energy efficiency smart, we save money - and we change the world from right here in our neighborhoods in Connecticut!